THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM):(a) DGCA has issued mandatory guidelines under Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) dated 24th April, 1997 for mandatory carriage of Airborne Collision and Avoidance System (ACAS). As per this CAR, aeroplanes having seating capacity of more than 30 or pay load capacity of more than 3 tons, shall be required to instal ACAS-II on or before 31.12.98. Aeroplanes having seating capacity of 10 to 30 or pay load capacity of 1 to 3 tons shall be required to install ACAS-I on or before 31.12.2003.

(b) and (c) Boeing-747 fleet of Air India is equipped with ACAS. Other aeroplanes of Air India and Indian Airlines are not equipped with ACAS. As regards foreign airlines, some airlines are not equipped with ACAS system, but will be required to instal the equipment for operation in Indian airspace by stipulated dates.

(d) The compliance of mandatory requirement of installation of Mode 'S' transponder was deferred due to non-availability of corresponding ground facilities at the Indian airports.

(e) Action against defaulting airlines will be taken after mandatory Circular of the DGCA comes into force w.e.f. 1.1.1999.

[Translation]

Management Committees for Railway Stations

*571. SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any policy regarding setting up of management committees for Railway Stations under the Chairmanship of Members of Parliament;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which such committees are likely to be set up; and

(d) the reasons for delay in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Setting up of Aluminium/Alumina Plant

*572 SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO:

SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up some Bauxite based Aluminium/Alumina Plants in the country during the Ninth during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof public/private sector-wise and location-wise; and

(c) the time by which these are likely to set up ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The Government have no proposal to set-up any new Bauxite based Aluminium/Alumina Plants in the country in public/joint sector during the Ninth Five Year Plan. As per the industrial policy, the aluminium industry has been exempted from the provision of compulsory licensing with a view to encourage private investment in the aluminium sector.

[Translation]

Privatisation of Postal Services

*573. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH:

SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS/ be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Government for participation of private sector in postal services;

(b) if so, whether any scheme has been formulated in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (c) Participation of the private sector in Postal Services has been only marginal and that also in the role of augumenting the efforts of the Department of Posts. Private agencies have been participating in identified areas of activity like sale of stamps and stationery, transportation of mails and provision of additional public facilities at a few places like, Post Shop. However, with the exception of those limited areas, it is not at present envisaged to involve private operators as an organised sector in the activities of the Department of Posts, both in terms of the extant policy of the Government in the postal sector and from the point of view of fulfilling the inherent social purpose of the postal services.

In order to provide basic postal facility like sale of stamps and stationery extensively, the Department of Posts has been allowing licenced agents to operate under specified terms and conditions.

The following agency system are presently in operation:-

Licenced Postal Agency:

This scheme, in operation since 1985, allows licensed agents to sell stamps and stationery and book registered articles. The agent is paid a percentage commission on the amount of stamps and stationery sold, and commission per registered article booked.

Keeping in view the staff opposition to the scheme, no new licence under this scheme is being issued since 1997. However, the agents given licence before the scheme

was held in abeyance continue to operate.

Licenced Stamp Vendor:

This scheme, introduced in 1969, was initially for headquarter towns of Heads of Postal Circles, and since 1983, it is extended to all areas. The scheme permits any individual, firm or society to take an agency for sale of stamps and stationery. STD/ISD/PCO booth holders are also eligible for this scheme.

Licence under this scheme is issued by the Head of Postal Division, subject to fulfilment of prescribed condition. No target is set for this purpose.

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana:

This scheme, introduced in 1995, has been devised to provide basic postal services in areas not having such services and justifying opening of a post office. In this scheme, the Gram Panchayat of the village where post office is justified is allowed to set up Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra to provide sale of stamps and stationery, booking of registered articles, delivery of unaccountable articles in the village, and facility for small savings schemes.

Foreign Companies in Broadcasting and Publishing Newspapers

*574. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA:

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have given permission to foreign firms to broadcast/telecast and publish newspapers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its likely impact on satellite TV and All India Radio;

(c) whether only Indian partners of foreign firms have been given this permission;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of Indian firms which are partners of foreign firms and which have been provided these facilities?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e): Do not arise.

[English]

Deletion of Minerals From Scheduled List of Minerals

*575. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some State Governments have represented to the Union Government to delete Limestone and Bauxite from the list of scheduled minerals under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. With a view to streamline the procedures for grant/renewal of Prospecting Licence/Mining Leases and to reduce delays, the State Governments of Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat have proposed for deletion of Limestone and Bauxite from the Schedule I of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957. The proposals received from the State Governments were discussed by the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) in its first meeting held on 29th April, 1997. The terms of reference of the Committee inter-alia include review of the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to recommend steps to make them compatible with the policy changes and to suggest steps to reduce delays in grant/renewal of Prospecting Licence/Mining Lease. The Committee is also to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant/renewal of prospecting Licence/Mining Leases and measures to be taken to prevent illegal mining.

Formulation of New Tourism Policy

*576. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated new Tourism Policy to attract more and more foreign tourists to boost foreign exchange earnings;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government also propose to focus on high spending tourists even if they may be few in number instead of attracting low spending ones in large number who could put pressure on inadequate infrastructure without generating adequate revenue; and

(d) if so, the steps taken for 'sustainable development' of the tourist sector to provide world class facilities to visitors?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d) The Department of Tourism has prepared a draft National Tourism Policy for the development of tourism. The salient features of the policy are:-

(i) It identifies domestic tourism, inbound tourism and outbound tourism and seeks to provide adequate focus on domestic tourism along with inbound tourism.

(ii) The policy emphasizes the poverty alleviation and employment generation aspects of tourism.

(iii) The preservation and protection of our natural